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The Wagner Theatre at Bayreuth.

(Correspondence of the London News.)

BAYREUTH, JUNE 5.

After a lapse of exactly two years I visited Bayreuth again a few days ago, in order to see the present state of Richard Wagner's *Nibelungen Theatre*. I was surprised to find the external structure almost finished. The theatre is now the first building seen by the traveller in approaching the city by rail. The interior is, however, quite bare; the machinery cannot be procured for some time to come; and the performances of the *Ring of the Nibelungen* have again been postponed—until the spring of 1876. This is the second postponement. Wagner's original plan was to bring out the *Ring* in the present summer; but he made his calculations on the hope of a warmer support from the Germans than he had so far met with—made them when he laid the foundation stone of the theatre two years ago this Whitsuntide, when over two thousand musicians and singers had gathered to do him honor. His plan was to give three entire performances of the four parts of the *Ring*. The necessary funds were to be procured from the sale of a thousand "patrons'" tickets at three hundred thalers apiece. Three hundred thousand thalers, — say in round numbers fifty thousand pounds—was the sum he required.

Thanks to the exertions of Wagner's personal friends, and of the many Wagner Societies in Germany and in England and in America, a hundred thousand thalers were quickly subscribed. With this sum Wagner at once commenced erecting the theatre. Then suddenly the foundation stopped, as it were, and some months ago it was thought by many that the composer's great plans would fall through. And this would doubtless have been the case had not King Ludwig of Bavaria again come to the assistance of his friend, and generously placed a credit of two hundred thousand thalers at Wagner's disposal, with the condition, however, that the sum be repaid out of the funds resulting from the sale of tickets in the future. The assertion that the young monarch presented the composer with the money unconditionally is not true. Since the receipt of this Royal credit some months ago, Wagner has completed all his contracts for machinery, scenery, and interior fittings, and the work will henceforth go rapidly forward. If the outside strikes us oddly with its appearance, which may be likened to a happy union of an ornamental barn and a large shot tower; the interior surprises us with its innovations and at the same time with its adaptability for theatrical purposes. The stage is of vast dimensions and can now be seen in its full proportions. It is sunk a depth of 37 feet, and has a height up to the pulley floor of 176 feet. It is in breadth ninety-five feet, by seventy-nine in length, and will have ten side scenes. The further stage, back of this, is forty feet long, by forty-nine broad. The width of the proscenium will be forty-five feet—the widest, I believe, in Germany. The young architect, Herr Runckevitz, who superintends the works for the builders, pointed out to me the peculiarities of the stage, the auditory, and the orchestral space. On the stage there will be neither footlights nor prompter's box. Wagner intends that his singers shall be firmly seated in the saddle ere they appear before the public. The stage scenery is being painted by the brothers Brückner in Coburg, from the designs of Hoffmann in Vienna. The smaller pieces will be finished in Coburg; the larger in

Bayreuth, in a large wooden hall erected at the rear of the theatre. The portion of the theatre devoted to the audience is remarkable for its simplicity. The plans were made principally from Wagner's own sketches. There will be no boxes; even the Royal circle at the back will only be elevated a few feet above the level of the last row of seats. Commencing immediately in front of the orchestral space, the rows of seats rise step by step, as they recede, "amphitheatrically," if I may so express it, the last row being twenty or more feet higher than the first, but the view of the stage being nowhere obstructed. In most theatres the ordinary form is the elongated semicircle; in the new Bayreuth Theatre we have the horseshoe form in the shape of an exact segment of a circle, the seats growing in width as they recede; so that, while the first row has a width corresponding with the proscenium (about fifty feet), the last row and the Royal circle or gallery extend to a width of over a hundred feet. The great width of the auditory (114 feet), and the comparatively small depth (79 feet), from the orchestra to the Royal gallery, enables each of the audience to command an almost perfect perspective view of the scenes represented on the stage. The ceiling of this part appears low to us, accustomed as we are to high tiers of boxes crowned with the upper gallery. There will be but one gallery, immediately over the Royal gallery, and this is simply made for the accommodation of the citizens (500) of Bayreuth, some of whom Wagner will invite to see the performances gratis. The sides of the auditory will be rendered slightly ornamental by pillars. But there will be nothing in the entire space to divert the attention of the audience from the stage and the scenes thereon represented. The approach to the first dozen rows of seats nearest the stage will be through four doors on either side; the back rows will be reached by entering the front of the theatre, two passages ways then leading underneath the Royal circle and half a score of the back rows, and emerging about a third of the way down. In this simply constructed auditory there will be seats for fifteen hundred persons, so that the theatre will hold, including the gallery for the Bayreuthers, about two thousand persons.

Wagner's arrangement of his orchestra is an interesting experiment. Desirous of presenting his stage pictures without any interruption to the gaze, and therefore of removing the mechanical production of music from sight, he came upon the idea of rendering his orchestra invisible to the audience. To this end he sinks the orchestral space seventeen feet below the level of the stage. The orchestra, which is to consist of a hundred and six members, will be seated in a space the entire width corresponding with the proscenium, and a depth extending ten feet under the stage itself. The Kapellmeister alone will be elevated above the rest, so that, though not seen by the audience, he will have full command of the stage. The mere sinking of the orchestra is, however, not the only innovation. Wagner leaves there a space of eighteen feet wide, and extending the entire breadth of the stage (not merely of the proscenium) and extending up to the roof, perfectly free. He calls this the Mystic Space, because he intends that here the invisible "wall of music," proceeding from the invisible orchestra, shall separate the Real (that is, the audience) from the Ideal (the stage pictures). If we may so express ourselves, the audience will perceive the scenes through an invisible wall of sound. Wagner anticipates from this

innovation some surprising results: mystic and beautiful music, and the apparent removal of the stage-picture further back—so that the entire scene will be as though witnessing a dream. Richard Wagner likewise intends to have a "reformed" public to witness his festal performances. The operas will commence as early as four o'clock in the afternoon; and will last until eleven; there being a pause of an hour between each act. For the unoccupied time there will be ample provision made. There will be several refreshment and retiring rooms, balconies, galleries, beside the garden grounds surrounding the theatre. The scene will be very enjoyable if the weather be favorable. The view from the theatre embraces the city of Bayreuth at our feet, and a gentle undulating landscape bounded by the Franconian mountains. For the princely and royal visitors there are separate refreshment rooms and a balcony on either side about one story high above the ground. So far, however, Wagner has been disappointed about the German Princes, since but few have taken any interest at all in him or his plans. The Khedive of Egypt and the Sultan of Turkey are among the *Nibelungen* "patrons." I think, however, that Wagner would prefer more German Princes and fewer foreign ones, since he intends his theatre and his festal performances to bear a thoroughly German national character—a school for the reformed German musical drama.

Wagner informed me that the *Ring of the Nibelungen* is complete with the exception of the instrumentation of a portion of the last part—"Götterdämmerung"—and this, being merely mechanical work, is a comparatively easy task. He has as yet concluded but few engagements with singers. He made a tour of the Northwestern German theatres some time ago for the purpose of selecting singers, but he returned home without finding any, and disappointed with the condition of opera in Germany. Everywhere he found French taste, ballet, and mannerism in singing, a sacrilegious mutilation of the music by most of the Kapellmeisters; in all the refusal to see the fact that the strength of the German lies in naturalness, and not in vain imitation of the French, to whom acting is second nature. Of male singers, Niemann (tenor) and Betz (bass), both of Berlin, have been secured. In fact, I believe, these two artists offered their services gratis, Betz's only condition being a seat during the festal performances for his wife. Wagner's greatest acquisition is a young Hungarian tenor, with a German name (Herr Glatzi), found by Hans Richter, the director of the Hungarian National Theatre at Pesth. Herr Glatzi was heretofore in an advocate's bureau, and sang occasionally in societies. He is said to have a magnificent form and voice, and Wagner, on hearing him, gave him the principal tenor rôle of "Siegfried." He is now in training, under the care of Herr Richter. Since Wagner can only engage his singers for one or two months in the year, he can only have them for rehearsal during their summer furloughs. It is gratifying to see singers of standing like Niemann and Betz supporting the composer with their strength, even considering it an honor to be "permitted" to take part in the festal performances.

Wagner has just taken possession of his new villa, looking on the Castle park. I found him in the enjoyment of good health, busy with the plans of architects and scenic artists, giving work to transcribers, and looking after the work going on in his own house and at the

new theatre. He regretted much that a postponement had been necessary, and felt deeply grateful to the King of Bavaria, without whose aid the work must have come to a deadstand. He spoke of the recent Lohengrin performances in New York, and of his admirers and promoters in England. Wagner said that if he lived he intended to give, after the Niebelungen Festival performance, annual performances of prize German operas, and each year one of his own operas in a style as originally intended by him. Thus *The flying Dutchman*, instead of being given in three acts, as is ordinarily the case, would be given in but one act with three tableaux. He wishes the Bayreuth Theatre to bear a national German character, not purely a Wagnerian one. The composer has two new operas fully sketched out—one entitled *Percival*, therefore another Grail subject, and *The Victory*, a Buddhist theme. I do not know what induced Wagner to leave the German legendary field for this latter work; the German papers asserted some time ago that he had promised to write an opera for the Khedive. In regard to the Bayreuth undertaking, we may assume that its future is now assured, and that the performances will actually take place in 1876, the funds now being in hand. I hope that before this time, the railroad companies will have placed Bayreuth in better communication with the rest of the world than it is at present. The city seems to have been wilfully neglected. Wagner completed his sixty-first year on the 22nd of May. The day was celebrated by the composer's musical friends in Munich and in Bayreuth in a pleasant manner.

Verdi's New Requiem Mass.

(Correspondence of the London Telegraph.)

PARIS, June 8.
Seldom has a new musical work been more talked about by anticipation than Verdi's new Mass, and never before have Frenchmen taken so much interest in a religious composition. Several of the Paris newspapers actually sent special correspondents to Milan, and their letters naturally had the effect of arousing considerable interest in the subject. There is much to strike the imagination in the history of this Mass. Manzoni and Verdi were intimate friends, and the musician had held the poet in high respect. The last time they met, the venerable author of "Il Cinque Maggio," that noble ode on the First Napoleon, said to the composer, "Let me press your hand once more, for I fear that we shall never meet again." The presentiment was justified; the next time they were together was under the marble roof of the Duomo in Milan, when all that was famous or high-born in Italy, from the Princes of the Blood Royal to the celebrities in literature and art, assembled to consign with becoming pomp the remains of the great poet of the Peninsula to their final resting-place. Lost in the crowd, unnoticed probably among the mass of uniforms and official costumes, was Manzoni's musical friend; and in that splendid edifice Verdi conceived the idea of perpetuating the memory of his friendship by writing a Requiem which should be linked with Manzoni's name. The very next day he wrote to the Municipality of Milan offering to complete his Memorial Mass in time to be performed on the first anniversary of his friend's death. Strangely enough, Verdi came to Paris to compose. Whereas most men who do head-work love to bury themselves in some country retreat when they set about the execution of a cherished plan, Verdi elected to write a Requiem in the noise of the Hôtel de Bade, on the Boulevard des Italiens. As soon as the work was finished offers of gratuitous help came from all parts of Italy, and singers were anxious, I am assured, to travel at their own expense from the ends of Sicily in order to take part in the celebration. There was no difficulty with artists, but when the time came for making arrangements religion stepped in the way. The most natural place in Milan in

which to perform a Memorial Mass was that white marvel of beauty and grandeur, the Cathedral, wherein the first Requiem had already been sung over Manzoni's remains. But the clergy of the Duomo objected to admit women-singers into the choir, and the scheme had to be abandoned. The "Proposto" of San Marco was more accommodating, and it happened that his church, by reason of its lower height, was better fitted for Verdi's purpose in an acoustic sense. The façade of the old edifice was draped in black, relieved with coronets of leaves, and above the portal waved a banner inscribed with the words, "To the memory of Alessandro Manzoni; 22nd May, 1874." The Mass was listened to with the greatest attention, and when it was repeated at the Scala the composer was called forward some twenty times. Immediately after the three performances in the theatre, the principal singers, accompanied by the author, set out for Paris, where they have been busily engaged for the past week in rehearsing the work with the chorus and orchestra of the Opéra Comique. As I mentioned in my telegram, only three public performances of the Mass have been as yet decided upon, each to take place in the afternoon, so that the evening representations of the Salle Favart may not be interfered with—except as regards the increased temperature of the auditorium. To-day a general rehearsal took place, according to the excellent plan generally adopted in France, to which the audience were specially invited. It was, therefore, essentially an audience *d'élite*—a meeting of connoisseurs. Nevertheless, the theatre was almost entirely filled, and the heat was absolutely terrific. The enthusiasm also rose to fever heat, and the indiscriminating applause frequently burst out in the midst of a piece, spoiling its proportions and preventing the hearers from fully appreciating its design. The music is of a singular character, and the louder the singing and the playing the more noisy were the demonstrations of delight.

After a single hearing under such circumstances, I do not, of course, pretend to offer more than the first vague and general impressions produced by a new work. The Mass is divided into seven numbers. The first comprises the "Requiem eternam dona eis," which merges into the Kyrie for four parts, solo and chorus. Number two consists of the "Dies iræ," which in its turn is divided into nine parts of very unequal merit. The *allegro agitato* on the opening words of the hymn, intended evidently to bring to the mind's eye all the awe and mystery of the day of judgment, seemed to me to miss its effect by reason of the very extravagance of the theatrical means employed. The rapid chromatic passages conveyed the impression of a fierce conflict, of a hand-to-hand street fight, rather than an idea of the destruction of a world. Nor did I find the tricky device of eight horns responding to each other from opposite extremities of the orchestra at all suggestive of the "Tuba mirum spargens sonum," of the awful sound at which the dead of centuries are to rise again. Still more stagey to my Northern way of thinking is the pianissimo utterance by the solo bass of the word "mors," several times repeated, and followed at two bars' distance by the word "stupebit," a trick which brings the clap-trap chorus to a weak conclusion. Then comes a setting of the "Liber scriptus proferetur" to a fugue—*en robe de chambre*. There are some good points to be found scattered about the trio "Quid sum miser"; the quartet and chorus, "Rex tremende magistratis"; the duet for female voices, "Recordare Jesu pie"; and the tenor solo of "Ingemisco." The bass solo "Confutatis" is, to my thinking, very ugly; but, *en revanche*, the final movement of the "Dies iræ," the "Lacrymosa dies illa," for quartet and chorus, is really charming from beginning to end. The melody on which the quartet is built is not only plaintive in itself, it is

essentially devotional in character, and it is supported by a very effective choral accompaniment until the final tranquil repetition of the opening "Dona eis requiem." Then follow a four-part offertory, "Domine Jesu," and a Sanctus for double choir—another fugue which, in spite of its eight parts, produces little effect. In refreshing contrast to this elaborate piece is the "Agnus Dei" for soprano and contralto with chorus. Nothing could be simpler in construction, nor could anything be much more charming. The two solo voices give out the flowing theme in unison and unaccompanied. It is then taken up by the chorus and orchestra, after which it is repeated by the solo voices, this time accompanied, and then a second time repeated by all the voices together. The "Lux æterna," a trio, pleased me less; but the final number for soprano, solo, and chorus, "Liberate me," wherein the chorus repeat the monotonous chant of the soprano solo, and wherein melodies already heard are effectively worked up, brings the work to a dramatic conclusion.

In this rough outline of the Mass I have quite failed to give any indication of the cause for the enthusiasm which the work unquestionably excited at Milan. But this may nevertheless be readily accounted for. In the first place, the mass is a glorification of a great man, and the national feeling is so strong in Italy, now that the Peninsula is one State, that every inhabitant of the most remote district assumes with pride his share in the honor paid to every Italian celebrity. Then Verdi himself is immensely and justly popular. I well remember that just two years ago I happened to be passing through Parma at the time the "Aida" was being given. There were the same singers and the same scenery that had been already applauded at the Scala of Milan. Such was the anxiety to hear the popular *maestro's* last work that hundreds came into Parma from all the neighboring towns. On the nights when "Aida" was given there was the greatest difficulty, as I remember to my cost, in getting a bed in any hotel, and many visitors who drove in from country places twenty miles distant passed the livelong night, after the performance was over, in the public rooms of every inn, discussing the merits of the music until daylight enabled them to make their way home. "Aida" was then interpreted by the famous quartet of singers whom Verdi chose for his Mass, and who sang to-day at the Opéra Comique. To them some share in the success of the work is undoubtedly due. It must also be borne in mind that the mass has been written for performance in presence of a people whose religious observances are accompanied by a wealth of decoration and a realism in the presentment of Divine mysteries which are repulsive to our ideas. To a race accustomed to the elaborately lighted-up transparencies in Neapolitan churches, to the carrying through the streets of the black-faced Bambino of the Ara Celi in Rome, to the representation by living men of the drama of the Redemption, there can be nothing antipathetic in the most realistic suggestion of the resurrection to a higher life. I fear that you in England would consider Verdi's Requiem to be theatrical in a most exaggerated degree, and I doubt much if you would consider the workmanship sufficiently artistic to atone for the tawdriness of the design.

A word or two will suffice for the performance. The musical forces at the disposal of the conductor were disposed somewhat differently from the way in which they are arranged in England. Looking to the auditorium, the violins were all stationed to the left of the stage, the brass and wood instruments being behind them. On the right-hand side were the soprano, the remainder of the chorus being at the back. Thus the instrumentalists were to the left and the chorists to the right of the spectator, those behind being on seats raised one above another to the back of the stage. In front of the violins were four chairs

for the principals, who sat in a row at right angles with the footlights, and the conductor stood opposite to them with his back half turned to the chorus. The latter were by no means above reproach; their voices were poor, and they sang with much indecision and uncertainty. In no respect could the choral singing be compared to that to which you are accustomed in London. The orchestra played well, but I was much struck by the thinness of tone produced. Signor Verdi conducted admirably. I was disappointed with Signor Capponi, who is far more effective in an opera than in a concert. Fortunately the tenor part is not important. Nor did I find Madame Waldmann's contralto so fine as it was two years ago. She forces her voice to such an extent as to ruin its quality; but she is an excellent artist, and, making allowance for the painful guttural tone of her lower notes, she gave all possible effect to the declamatory passages allotted to her. Signor Maini has a fine bass voice, but he is much addicted to the modern Italian vice of hallooing. For Madame Stolz, the soprano, I have nothing but praise. Her superb voice, of most extensive compass, is bright, clear, metallic, and thrilling from the lowest to the highest note. Her *mezza voce* is very sweet, and she can hold a note at full power without the slightest apparent strain. She sang with fire throughout, and she was the only unexceptionable executant in a performance of generally unequal merit. In short, I was strengthened in the opinion I formed two years ago, that she is the finest dramatic singer of the day. It is only fair, however, to add that I have heard her but twice, and each time in Verdi's music. I can readily believe that she has no *agilité*, and that she would be all abroad in any but the most modern school.

Herr Hans Von Bülow against Verdi's Requiem.

M. Oscar Commettant has given an account, in a letter to the *Siècle*, of the first performance of Verdi's Mass at the Teatro della Scala, Milan. In this letter, he has entered into some further particulars concerning a scandal of which Herr Hans von Bülow was the author. The following are extracts from the letter:—

"The author of this scandal, which has set all Milan in commotion, is Herr von Bülow, the gentleman who was divorced from his wife, now Mad. Richard Wagner. This distinguished pianist, after having received a warm welcome from the Milanese, and after having given several profitable concerts, which have added some few Italian liras (paper value, 1 franc each) to his own lyre, which is provided with no inconsiderable number of different strings, could think of nothing more gentlemanly to do, for the purpose of thanking the press and the public of this hospitable city, than to insult everyone in the person of the most illustrious Italian composer living, Giuseppe Verdi. Herr von Bülow acted wisely in leaving Milan after this deed of prowess, for he would inevitably have been hissed, wherever he had been met, in the street or even in the theatre. Such are the facts, which, however, did not surprise us on the part of an apostle of the Music of the Future, the most insupportable, the vainest, and the falsest sect, whether speaking or singing, as well as the most intolerant, with which I am acquainted. The Corporation of Milan thought they were honoring Herr Hans von Bülow, when they forwarded him an invitation to the first performance of Verdi's *Requiem* at St. Mark's. The effect of this polite invitation was to throw Liszt's ex-son-in-law into a state of exasperation very disquieting for his health.

"For whom do they take me," he is reported to have said to those who chose to listen, "to fancy that I, Hans, the greatest of the Bülows, should go and compromise myself with a lot of idiots who will flock with their long ears to St. Mark's? A *Requiem* by Verdi! It is enough to make any one die of laughter. I pronounce this Mass detestable, though I have not heard it, for the simple reason that we, and our friends, the inhabitants of erudite Germany, are the only sufficiently profound musicians to write sacred music. Let the French representatives of the musical press of Paris, who

have come expressly from that capital to hear the Mass executed for the first time, go and hear it; the Mass is made for them, and they are made for the Mass. As for me, Hans, the greatest of the Bülows, I shall remain shut up in my room as long as this funeral buffoonery lasts. I am particular, should people persist in accusing me of having heard this Harlequin's Mass, about being able to prove an alibi. These words, heard by a large number of persons, caused a thorough feeling of indignation throughout the city. The *Pungolo*, unable to believe the truth of the report, took steps to ascertain the real facts. A friend, on whom it could rely, brought back the following official notice, which I read in to-day's edition of the said paper. I give a literal translation:—
'Hans von Bülow was not present at the representation given yesterday in St. Mark's. Hans von Bülow must not be included among the visitors who have come to Milan to hear Verdi's sacred music.'

"This reply does not prove that the author of *Rigoletto* and of *Aida* is not a composer universally applauded and esteemed; it does not prove that his Mass is not good, or that Herr Hans von Bülow has written a better, since Herr Hans von Bülow has never done anything; but it does prove, alas! that this Teutonic dealer in semiquavers possesses more vanity than genius, and that his education is defective in the very thing which education should give us: a sense of propriety.

"OSCAR COMMETTANT."

Verdi's Requiem:—Other Reports.

The London *Musical World* makes the following extracts from French papers, many of which sent representatives all the way to Milan.

The *Figaro* was represented at Milan by Mons. H. Marcello, who, after noticing the various numbers in the Mass, goes on to say:—

"Such is, in its *ensemble*, this magnificent work, which, I believe, will take rank as one of the grandest musical conceptions of our time. We nowhere find, save, perhaps, in a few passages, the ordinary forms and well-known features of Verdi's manner. There are in it none of the exaggerations, the rude contrasts, and the negligencies of style which too often mark his other works. The ideas are elevated; the style sustained; the orchestration firm and powerful; the disposition of the voices, and the treatment of the parts, always remarkable. The new forms and exigencies of modern art are, in it, ably associated with the traditions of the Italian school. Still, there will, probably, be long discussions as to whether the Mass is of a character sufficiently religious. Into those decisions I will not enter, for they would take us too far a-field. I believe, however, that, in order to treat the question, it is necessary to keep the fact in view that the *Requiem* is nothing but a drama—a sacred drama, if you will, but a drama in which the pathetic is carried to its highest pitch of intensity."

So much for M. Marcello, of the *Figaro*, and now let us turn to M. "Caréni," of *La Liberté*, who observes:—

"We are still too much moved to speak in detail of this marvellously fine work, of this vast and grandiose creation with which Verdi has endowed the art of music. The *Requiem* is marked by inspiration of gigantic power, religious emotion, novel effects, and bold harmonies, while the ideas are multiplied to such an extent that the mind is bewildered. Behold the art in all its beauty, in all its purity, set off by a science profound, but never sterile."

M. "Caréni" is a trifle exclamatory, and, perhaps, uses terms which have a taint of exaggeration upon them. We leave him, therefore, to hear what M. Arthur Heulhard, of *L'Esquenaire*, has to remark upon the subject. Thus, M. Heulhard:—

"Don't ask me to analyze this formidable work of Verdi's. I have been impressed by its colossal proportions, and as much astonished as touched. It has made an ineffaceable impression upon me, but I do not feel able to discourse upon a profound feeling which I cannot analyze. What I know is that Verdi's Mass is a grand monument of musical art in this generation, that it marks incontestable progress in the master's dramatic style, and that it raises him to the highest rank among sacred composers. * * * Never have his voices and orchestra shown such unity. Never has his palette, now free from badly mixed colors, produced effects so powerful and luminous."

M. Oscar Commettant, of the *Siècle*, not being given to the hiccupping style of comment, proceeds

gravely to an analysis of the Mass, and gets as far as the first part. He makes no general observations that can well be quoted, but the tone of his criticism is eminently favorable; thus, he says of the *Lacrymosa*, "I promise those who study this a pleasure which will not be without profit. * * * Verdi has written nothing better."

The critic of *La Patrie* confines himself to general remarks, and the subjoined are among them:—

"I will not insist upon an analysis of this colossal work. It is a revelation, and I do not hesitate to say that it far surpasses all that the master has produced up to the present time. All is new in form and idea. Noble and elevated ideas are there joined to profound science. We find in it new harmonies, unforeseen effects, and great boldness. It is a new Verdi who has come to the surface."

Among the Italian critics, Signor Filippi discusses, in *La Perseveranza*, the style of the Mass, and says, after insisting on Verdi's marked individuality:—

"His Mass resembles very little the sacred music of other times and other masters. Its chief feature is the happy fusion of religious and dramatic elements. Observe that I say *dramatic*, not *theatrical*; for, truly, of the theatrical there is only a little, which neither spoils nor wounds the religious sentiment. If you call the *Requiem* theatrical, how do you call those masterpieces, the *Stabat* and *Mass*, of Rossini? Verdi does not come short of the chief characteristics of the religious style: he has gravity, breadth, and elevation. It may be that he wants unction, ascetic calm, and the feeling of liturgical things, but these qualities belong neither to our time nor to our temperament."

Pianoforte Discords.

(From the London *Athenæum*.)

The quarrels of musical circles over the pretensions of professors form a very old story. The feuds of the respective partisans of Handel and Buononcini were most bitter and uncompromising. The Gluckists and Piccininists had a long warfare. We need say nothing of the strifes of *prime donne*, and the disputes of impresarios. But a different war of interests has broken out in London. Pianoforte discords have sprung up, and two camps are in presence, the respective partisans of which carry on hostilities in the most uncompromising manner. To be sure, Herr Halle continues his recitals, undisturbed by the contention; Herr Pauer plunges into his historical harpsichords with his customary *sang froid*; Miss Agnes Zimmermann is permitted to play and compose in perfect tranquillity; M. Billet recites as he did a quarter of a century since, and is left alone in his glory; Signor Alfred Jaell, the Austrian-Italian, has come back, and no one protests against his musical intelligence and his charm of touch; M. Duvernoy, the classical champion of the Paris Conservatoire, in chamber compositions is not attacked. These are all great artists, but they do not stand in the way of anything that is regarded as a vested interest. Ostensibly the breach of peace has been caused by the presence of two lady pianists, a Russian and a German—Madame Essipoff on the one hand, and Fräulein Krebs on the other. It may be asked why war should have broken out on account of two such distinguished artists, each a worthy representative of her own country, whose styles are totally dissimilar, and whose characteristics are so opposite? The answer will be found in the two notices which have appeared of the two pianists, in which amateurs are informed that, whatever may be the gifts, natural and acquired, of the two performers, it must be distinctly understood that they are inferior to Madame Arabella Goddard; and as Madame Essipoff has proved herself to be the greatest executant of the lady players of the age, Fräulein Krebs is selected as a foil to the Russian artist. So the most eulogistic articles have been printed on behalf of the fair Saxon, whilst the very existence of the Russian lady has been ignored in journals which effect to sustain native talent. It is said that the public retirement from the profession of Madame Arabella Goddard was a preparation for her return, and that next season our English pianist will resume her pianoforte career. If the rumor be confirmed, she will be heartily welcomed as the finest lady performer this country has produced, and she will meet with more fair play from journalism generally than foreign pianists have received during her absence. But we must protest against a system which exercises a pernicious influence upon art and artists. The acknowledged ability of Madame Arabella Goddard will uphold

her position here when she returns to the profession in which she holds high and honorable rank, without the *exploitation* of her name against every continental new-comer. And in exalting Fräulein Krebs—in order to extinguish Madame Essipoff—Madame Goddard's admirers are doing a very foolish thing. Since Chopin and Liszt, taking advantage of the superiority of the grand concert pianofortes to the miserable clavecins, on which Bach had to play, and Beethoven also in his early days, introduced more varied readings, more poetic fancy, more marvellous manipulation, a race of pianoforte players has sprung up who carry out the conceptions of those composers. This "higher development" has of late years assumed still larger proportions and greater importance, and there are a certain class of pianists, bigots and partisans, educated in a narrow-minded school, who have chosen to set their faces as well as their hands against the performances of the period. Of course, this opposition is only to be found in London amongst, perhaps, a very limited number of people, who write of the "higher development" as being non-natural and inartistic in art. The particular professors who are "tabooed" are Schumann, Dr. Liszt, Herr Rubinstein, Dr. Von Bülow, Herr Brahms, Herr Raff, &c., all of whom are, we are told, out of the domain of "pure art." Is it to be concluded, then, that the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, his posthumous quartets, the orchestral works of Berlioz, of Wagner, the operatic innovations of Meyerbeer, of Gounod, are outside the boundaries of "pure art"? Music has never been at a standstill: it has been progressive ever since Guido gave us his notation, ever since improvements were made in the manufacture of instruments, and, above all, ever since we had the faculty of execution carried to the point which it has attained. And is it not a cruel thing to attack, under the miserable pretext of a protest against "higher development," the ability of a pianist, and to try to diminish her justly-acquired fame by exalting the merits of an inferior? However, neither can the reputation of Fräulein Krebs be raised by extravagant eulogium, nor the fame of Madame Essipoff be affected by significant silence or by praise bestowed "between the lines." It was shown in the case of Dr. Von Bülow how vain is the attempt to renew the game which was too successfully played with Herr Rubinstein. The advance of musical judgment and taste in amateur circles, and the high-minded feelings of cultivated musicians, will suffice to protect foreign musicians whose pretensions are based on exceptional gifts. This is our reply to the earnest request that the *Athenæum* should become the champion of "oppressed nationalities." We are the defenders of art, not of artists. Their ability is their own protection, whether they are natives or foreigners, and it will be duly recognized, let the direct or indirect opposition come from what quarter it may.

IT RAINS PIANISTS. The same journal of May 30 tells us:

It has rained recitals this week. Such a downpour of pianoforte performances as there has been within four days is unprecedented in our musical annals. The fact proves the popularity of the instrument, and shows the extent to which its cultivation has been carried. The truth is that a recital is a cheap mode of getting a first-rate lesson, and the lady amateurs are not insensible to the advantage of availing themselves of the readings of a first-class professor, and of acquiring some little notion of how difficulties can be overcome. There is another aspect in which this increase in the number of recitals may be regarded; and that is, as a gratifying evidence of the advance of public taste; for to find audiences who will for two hours listen, not only with deep attention, but with occasional enthusiasm to the classical works of various masters, ancient and modern, indicates that music of the soundest schools must be studied in the right spirit at the present period. The four artists who have entered the lists this week are, Mr. E. H. Thorne (an Englishman), last Tuesday, in St. George's Hall; Madame Annette Essipoff (Russian), on Wednesday, in St. James's Hall; Fräulein Marie Krebs (Saxon), in the same locality, on Thursday; and yesterday (Friday), whilst Herr Halle (German) was instructing his hearers in St. James's Hall, M. Alphonse Duvernoy (French) was equally zealous and intelligent in the execution of classical chamber compositions in the Hanover Square Rooms. We can refer specially to the recitals of Tuesday and Wednesday only. *Place aux dames.*

It is of the fair pianist from the banks of the Nera we must first speak. Madame Essipoff is already the talk of the town. She seems almost to have dropped from the clouds, so utterly unknown were her name and fame until she played at the New Philharmonic Concert, on the 16th inst. But such a marvellous executant, coming here unheralded from Russia, caused dismay in those circles where the name of one performer only is permitted to be mentioned, and a cry was raised "that it was all very well her playing the orchestral concertos and fantasias of Chopin, of Rubinstein, and of Liszt, but wait until Madame Essipoff performs Beethoven or Bach, Mozart or Mendelssohn, the real divinities of the pianoforte." It must have been distressing to the narrow-minded partisans of particular performers, to listen to Wednesday's programme, in which were productions by Bach, such as the Sarabande Double Gigue, from the Suite Anglaise, in D minor,—by Handel, such as the well-known Variations in E major,—by Beethoven, such as the Waldstein Sonata in C major, Op. 53,—by John Field, such as his Nocturne, No. 4, in A major,—by Gluck, such as his Gavotte,—all interpreted by Madame Essipoff, with the highest appreciation of the intentions of the various composers, and, for a lady, with an unparalleled degree of digital dexterity combined with power and precision, sensibility and charm. Can it be wondered that a large auditory, in which was included a vast array of professors and of cultivated connoisseurs, duly appreciated and warmly applauded the wondrous skill of the new comer? In addition to the pieces just cited, the lady introduced no less than seven compositions by Chopin, with the grace and feeling and *verve* which they so imperiously exact; for, whether in the *nocturne*, the *barcarole*, the *étude*, the *valse*, or the *schërzo*, the Polish pianist and composer, to quote his own language, has always some theme recalling his native land. To a friend who ventured to suggest that he did not dwell enough on some melodious *motif*, he sadly replied, "I am always thinking of my country, and then I vent my indignation at her wrongs in those runs and scales over the piano which you think are in excess." Madame Essipoff, who is the second wife of M. Leschetizky, a famed pianist, executed one of his solos, "Les Alouettes." But Chopin was the prominent point of interest, and in his works Madame Essipoff displayed the *legato* quality which Liszt has declared to be so rarely shown in the realization of Chopin's dreamy episodes. The lady was quite right in not complying with any demands for *encores*. Two hours of such playing as she got through from memory is quite tax enough on the brain, not to mention the manual fatigue.

Mr. Thorne can claim a high and honorable position amongst English pianists. His executive skill is of no ordinary order, and he did not over-tax his powers in the selection of the Partita in G major, by Bach; in the Sonata Appassionata, Op. 57, by Beethoven; in the Berceuse, Op. 57, by Chopin; in the Duet, with variations on a French theme, Op. 10, by Schubert, dedicated to Beethoven, with his pupil, Mr. Duncan Hume, as ally. But Mr. Thorne particularly pleased his audience by a truly poetic execution of Sir W. S. Bennett's "Maid of Orleans" sonata, the prison-scene of which, the *adagio*, was given with delicacy and refinement. Mr. Thorne was formerly organist in Chichester Cathedral, and was a Windsor Chapel choir-boy before he took the organ of Henley-on-Thames. He has given historical pianoforte concerts with success in Brighton.

The Church and the Stage in Connection with Religious Music.*

For some years past, anyone may have observed that a certain change has taken place in musical composition, in so far as that musicians, finding it impossible to get grand theatrical music performed, and not choosing—some of them, at any rate—to descend to writing pieces of buffoonery and comic operettas, however profitable such works might prove, have turned to religious music. The public have followed them, and may have been beheld eagerly flocking in crowds to wherever works of this description were to be heard. When the impetus had once been given, the grand models, the master-pieces bequeathed by the true masters, were exhumed; they were interpreted with all requisite care, and the public did not fail on their part. The public may while away their leisure moments as they choose with light productions, but they always appreciate what is grand and beautiful.

*From the Art Musical.

It is thus that we have seen young composers write hymns, masses and oratorios; it is thus we have been enabled to hear a masterly work of Handel, to which there has now been added one no less admirable by Bach. What could composers do better, when discouraged by the difficulty of ever beholding their works played at one or other of our two great musical theatres, which were generally kept open with old stock pieces? Ought they to have gone with the stream; ought they, deserting true music, to have thought only of their pecuniary interest and have written for the so-called theatres? Some have followed this course: there are even some who have done so with advantage. But whither did it lead? To an ephemeral popularity and a money success; both highly tempting, it is true, and it is meritorious to know how to resist them.

Religious music, however, had a right to this kind of reparation. We must not forget that all the great masters have paid tribute to it, and that it was by sacred compositions that the majority of them began. Run through the biographies of celebrated composers; read the catalogue of the works they left. You will always find, together with chamber music and theatrical scores, many and many religious works, such as motets, hymns, psalms, misereres, stabats, requiems, masses, oratorios, &c. There are some masters, notably among the Italians, who especially cultivated this branch of the art. Such as Marcello, Palestrina, Martini, &c. Scarcely any composers have attempted the stage before first rendering themselves known by something remarkable in the way of sacred music. They were going back to the origin of music. Who does not know that musical notes were named by a monk, Guido d'Arezzo, after the initial syllables of a canticle? Who does not know that, in Italy, the cradle and temple of music, composers retained, up to the middle of the present century, the name of *chapel masters*, even when they no longer wrote for aught but the stage? It is a strange circumstance, too, that composers not professing the Roman Catholic faith, should, like those who did profess it, be seen paying their tribute to art, by writing, for a church which was not their own, pages of sacred music, and even masses! People are not generally acquainted—I am now speaking of the public properly so-called—with anything more than some few works which have remained celebrated, and are performed pretty often. To cite one or two, we may mention the *Stabat*, of Pergolesi, the *Requiem* of Mozart, the *Messe du Sacre* of Cherubini, the *Miserere* of Palestrina, oratorios by Mendelssohn, &c., and, more recently, Rossini's *Stabat, Mass*, and three Sacred Choruses, with names borrowed from the three theological virtues. But the number of fine sacred musical compositions is very considerable. We repeat it purposely: it is rare for a composer not to have one such work among his musical luggage; it is rare for him not to have essayed the sacred branch of his art. Take the *Dictionnaire des musiciens* by Fétis. You will mark one peculiarity in it. The majority of masters who have left a name justly celebrated were initiated in musical art by organists, and sketched out their first compositions on the projecting shelf of an organ case. The reason is simple. Great cities do not enjoy the exclusive privilege of giving birth to musicians; some musicians have been born in an out-of-the-way village. The only master in the place is the organist; he perceives in a child great aptitude, almost a vocation; he teaches him the principles of his art. The child, on growing up to be a youth, writes some essays in the form of sacred music; later, when he is a man, he leaves the church for the stage, as he left the village for the city. This is the history of Verdi, and it is that of a great number of other composers, especially in Italy.

Lastly, before the return towards it was apparent, sacred music was somewhat neglected. In Paris more particularly, where, as in all great capitals, the necessities of material existence inevitably triumph over noble aspirations, young composers asked themselves whether it was not more profitable to write for the stage than for the altar. At the Theatre, success promised them renown, popularity, and perhaps,—for who knows—celebrity, if the success were repeated; more than this, it promised them substantial authors' rights, that is to say: certain material means of existence, easy circumstances, or absolutely a fortune! In the Church, on the contrary, they were merely sacrificed to art: people would speak of them for a day or two, and then came oblivion. And no pecuniary profit. The most fortunate could scarcely hope to

voice,..... Shield - ed and di - rect - ed.

Increase in wisdom and in - crease..... in worth.

laws o - bey,..... o - - - bey, O, how blest, blest are

and all His laws..... o - bey.

laws, His laws..... o - bey. Blest are

cresc.

O, how blest..... are they,

O, how blest are they,

they ; O, how blest, blest are

they ; O how blest,

pp *cresc.*

O, how blest are they, O, how blest, O, how blest..... are

pp

they, O, how blest, blest..... are

pp

blest are they, O, how blest..... are

pp

p

they.

they.

ALTO. I. SOLO.

A-

they.

pp

Ped.

*

Allegro moderato.

las, that all by virtue saint - ed, Find life a doubt - ful maze, Its

paths, bewild - er'd ways! That souls who seek the Lord, who would re - main un-

taint - ed, Meet on - ly foes..... on ev'ry side! That they must

war against oppress - ors! Where can the righteous safely hide? The earth is

fil - led, the earth is fill - ed with vile transgress - ors!

Recitativo. SOPR. I. SOLO.

O, David's re - gal home! thou Ci - ty lov'd so well, Renowned Mount where

sf p *sf*

God himself once deign'd to dwell; Why is it that on thee the heav'ns in wrath have

f p

ALTO I. SOLO.

frowned? Behold, Zi - on, behold, canst thou refrain thy tears? See a stern stranger

mf

TUTTI. *ff*

Behold, Zi - on, be-
crowned, Upon thine an.....cient throne appears!

TUTTI. ff

Behold, Zi - on, be-

TUTTI. *ff*

TUTTI. ff

cresc. *ff*

col 8vo ad lib.

derive some slight advantage from the sale of their works to a publisher courageous enough to bring them out. Even then the works must be really remarkable, while the slightest trifle for the stage would certainly bring the musician in so much per cent, on the sale. These considerations, which are not without weight, drove young musicians from the church and directed them towards the stage. Hence the dearth of new works of sacred music. The most conscientious wrote a few specimens in this style, if only for the satisfaction of their professors; but they did so, as we say, "in the silence of their study," and the work remained sterile; when once completed, it was put away in a pigeon-hole of the author's desk, whence it never emerged.

There must, however, be a certain sentiment of satisfaction in treating this style of composition, because we have seen not only pious men, like Mozart and Pergolesi, write, during the last moments of their lives, the one his imperishable *Stabat*, and the other his no less celebrated *Requiem*, but composers with very little zeal in religious matters return to this style, towards the close of their existence, as if to finish their career where they commenced it, and, at the same time, draw near to God. To cite only a single example from among thousands, it was thus that Rossini, after having laid down his fertile pen for years, resumed it to write his fine *Stabat*, his Sacred Choruses, his little Mass, and many other sacred efforts, which we shall know some day, as his intimate friends know now. It was thus, also, that, after writing so many masterpieces, and when he was believed to be thinking of repose, Verdi composed the grand Mass for Manzoni, which was solemnly executed at Milan on the 22nd May.

We can only applaud his return, which has been apparent in France for the last few years, towards sacred music, and exhort young musicians not to desert a class of writing which, though not affording, it is true, the positive satisfaction offered by theatrical music, possesses the advantage of elevating the soul, and causing it to resist the temptations of another and very futile class of compositions, that of little *buffo* music. We know very well that we must have some of this little music: it enlivens and amuses us; but we must not have too much of it, and, at this moment especially, it is invading us in such force as to imperil what is grand.

M. DE THEMES.

The New Diapason.

(From the London Athenæum.)

The first appearance of Mlle. Singelli as *Lady Enrichetta*, in Flotow's "Martha," and the return of Signor Campanini to the character of *Lionello* would have proved, perhaps, a source of great gratification to the Drury Lane audience of the 28th ultimo, but for a disagreeable contrariety, which seriously affected the *ensemble* of the execution, as well as the chief artists in the cast. This was the first introduction of the French pitch. It may be recollected that the Society of Arts took up the question of establishing a uniform musical pitch in this country in 1859, and a committee of professors, manufacturers of instruments, instrumentalists, mathematicians, &c., drew up an elaborate report, and recommended the adoption of the pitch suggested at a congress of musicians at Stuttgart in 1834, basing their calculation of a pitch 528 C, = 440 for A, on a 32 feet organ pipe, giving 35 vibrations per second instead of 32. In order that the several pitches referred to in the report of the committee may be known, we annex their list:—

Handel's Tuning Fork (c. 1740).....	A at 416	—	C at 499 1-5
Theoretical Pitch.....	A at 426 2-3	—	C at 512
Philharmonic Society.....	A at 433	—	C at 518 2-5
Diapason Normal (1859).....	A at 435	—	C at 522
Stuttgart Congress (1834).....	A at 440	—	C at 528
Italian Opera, London (1859).....	A at 455	—	C at 546

The committee conceived that by aiming at a compromise—by adopting the Stuttgart pitch, which is but a few vibrations higher than the Diapason Normal, or, in other words, by adopting a quarter of a note below the present pitch, whereas the French pitch was half a tone lower than the London one—the depression required for the wood and brass instruments would be comparatively easy. Now on two points there was a general agreement among the conductors of the period; first, that a pitch uniform throughout the world of music was highly desirable; and secondly, that if it could be accomplished, the lowering of our high pitch to bring it down to some universal standard was expedient. But the many varieties of pitch in different countries, and the constant changes which are made according to the caprices of singers or the

crotchets of conductors, formed a serious objection to the proposed uniformity. Strong differences of opinion were expressed between the musicians and the mathematicians, as to the number of vibrations which should form the basis of uniformity; and during the discussion, it came out that a high church pitch existed in the days of Sebastian Bach. The committee, however, were unanimous on one point, that the capabilities and convenience of the human voice in singing the compositions of the great vocal composers ought to be the guide for a definite pitch.

Now if this resolution had been acted upon, we should have heard nothing more about an alteration of our high pitch, for with it our greatest vocalists, male and female, who have ever been known in the musical annals, whether in opera or oratorio, have won their fame, although some modern artists who for years and years had been singing to the delight of the public and their own great profit, with the abused diapason, took up the notion of a lower pitch. It need scarcely be added that they were either sopranos or tenors; for the barytones and basses were quite content with the *status quo*. Manufacturers of instruments, particularly of organs and piano-fortes, were not particularly anxious for any alteration, because their stock in hand would be deteriorated in value. The stringed players were quite opposed to innovation, inasmuch as their brilliancy of *timbre* would be diminished sensibly; and it was clear that a change of pitch would excite endless confusion, and would entail an enormous outlay to carry it out. Besides, if not enforced by legislative enactment, the adoption of the new pitch would be but partial.

An attempt was made to raise a subscription to buy new instruments for all the artists who played on the wood or brass ones, and to alter the pitch of all the cathedral, church and other organs in the United Kingdom. But this mode of attaining universality was an utter failure. And so from 1859 to 1872 our pitch remained undisturbed, until a *prima donna* at Covent Garden, Madame Adelina Patti, who thought it would be more comfortable for her to sing her music half a tone lower (really without the slightest physical necessity for this change), made it a *sine qua non* in her contract that the pitch should be lowered, and agreed, we are assured, to pay £100 towards the outlay for new wood and brass instruments for the band. Mr. Gye carried out the reduction, the new instruments becoming the property of the theatre like any scenic appliances. Professors and amateurs know full well the disastrous results of the introduction of the French Diapason Normal at Covent Garden; the pitch ever since the innovation has been a source of confusion, sometimes higher, sometimes lower, and transposition has ever and anon been resorted to, despite the lowering, as only recently with the new tenor, Signor Bolis, in "William Tell." *Prime donne*, however, agree as to one course of action: they outbid each other as to terms, and insist upon equal privileges. And so Madame Christine Nilsson followed in the wake of Madame Adelina Patti, and in the Drury Lane contract for this season Mr. Mapleson had an article inserted, that the Diapason Normal should be the pitch at Her Majesty's opera.

If the impresario had been prudent, he would have had, as we assume he could not do without the Swedish songstress, the new instruments ready for the commencement of the season, in order to afford time for the "seasoning" of the wood and brass. But to introduce a new pitch at the close of May was a great mistake, as was painfully evident on the first night of the use of the new instruments in "Martha," and on Saturday night at the performance of "Faust," when Madame Nilsson made her first appearance in her favorite part of *Margherita*. In both operas principals and chorists were alike singing sharp or flat; and as regards the newly-imported brass and wood from Paris, the clanging tone of the former and the flatness of the latter served to diminish the effect ordinarily produced by the splendid orchestra. And there was a Nemesis in store for Madame Nilsson. For the first time her intonation was imperfect. Constant use will perhaps render the wood and brass agreeable to the ear, and the singers will gradually accommodate their register to the lowering of the pitch; but Covent Garden has already raised the pitch a quarter of a tone, and Drury Lane will in due course follow. Perhaps the committee of the society of arts may have been right in recommending the Stuttgart pitch as the one having the best success here. As things stand, the pitch at Covent Garden is a quarter of a tone and at Drury Lane it is half a

tone lower than the pitch at Exeter Hall, the Crystal Palace, the Royal Albert Hall and other concert halls, and the pitch which is prevalent throughout the United Kingdom. Here is confusion worse confounded. If the players of the wood and brass at the two Italian opera houses were to take the instruments in use there to the festivals, or to Sydenham, or to South Kensington, what a *charivari* it would be.

Balfe's Posthumous Opera.

Three performances have now been given of "*Il Talismano*," and the general impression is confirmed that Balfe's posthumous opera is most successful in the parts stamped with the old style of the master, and least so where he has made ambitious attempts at the effects of the modern German school. Balfe was no great contrapuntist: indeed he used to profess a candid and hearty contempt for the fetters of musical theory. He was a natural melodist: he "lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came," being neither derv'd out nor hammered out. There was a certain spontaneity and fulness in his tunefulness, which smacked of his nationality; and it was that which made him popular. Much of this character invests "*Il Talismano*," and it is in the pure Balfean passages that most interest and pleasure lie. The tenor romance for instance, which runs through the work, "*Candido fiore*," with its tender cantabile, is a perfect specimen of the old master. It is not strikingly original: that is to say its phrases suggest half-a-dozen separated reminiscences; but the style, the stringing together, and the grace of the whole are pure Balfe, and the result is charming. The song is the keynote of the opera, as it were. Another for Edith—her first air, by the way—is no less admirable. This is "*Placida notte*" ("Solemnly softly cometh the nightfall"), with a change from D major to E flat, and an accompaniment in the composer's best manner. Some of the choral numbers, too, are very fine.

"*Il Talismano*," it must be remembered, was originally written as an English opera in three acts, to the libretto of Mr. Arthur Mathison, based upon the chief episode of Scott's "*Talisman*." The talisman proper, however, does not come into the story at all, nor is Saladin introduced except as an obscure Emir. Mr. Mathison originally intended to call the work "*The Knight of the Leopard*," but the association with Scott's novel overrid all other considerations. The work has been mapped out with good effect both for music and spectacle. As the curtain rises, a troop of Saracenic soldiers in the desert sing a chorus, "*Soldiers of Araby*." They disperse, and Sir Kenneth of Scotland and the Emir Sheerkohf enter; Sir Kenneth declares himself an envoy from the Princes of the Crusade to the noble ladies, Richard's Queen, Berengaria, and his cousin, Edith Plantagenet, &c., who have secluded themselves for prayer and meditation in the rock-carved chapel of the hermit of Engaddi. The Emir offers to guide the knight to his destination, and after a duet the pair set forth on their journey. Scene the second shows us a corridor of the desert chapel, and Edith Plantagenet enters; she sings a recitative and prayer and, on hearing that Sir Kenneth is approaching, expresses her joy in an aria, and is then summoned by Nectabannus to the presence of the Queen, to robe for the holy vespers. The slave Nectabannus, in a recitative and song, reveals his own malicious disposition, by declaring his hatred of beauty, brightness, love, &c., and his delight in their opposites. Scene the third is the interior of the chapel, and here the Queen, and Edith, accompanied by the Court ladies, &c.,—all clad in conventual robes—nuns, acolytes, &c., enter in procession, singing a "*Salve Regina*." Edith recognizes Sir Kenneth and drops a rosebud at his feet, nuzzling, as she does so, a sign of silence. As the procession gradually recedes, the knight apostrophizes the rosebud in a song, "*Flow'et, I kiss thee*," the "*Slave Regina*" mingling with its last strains; the tones of the organ add their harmonies to the melodious sounds, and as Sir Kenneth falls on one knee, pressing the precious rosebud to his lips, the curtain descends on the first act. The second act opens in the tent of King Lion Heart. Sir Kenneth enters, and is warned by the King against loving too lofly. "Tempt not, Sir Leopard, the paw of the lion!" Their interview is suddenly interrupted by De Vaux rushing in to tell the King that the Duke of Austria has planted his banner side by side with that of England on Sir George's Mount, the place of honor in the camp, and ceded to Richard as acknowledged leader of the Crusade. Richard's hot blood takes fire at this news, and

with a short trio, "to the mount, oh! to the mount!" the three hurriedly quit the scene, and repair sword in hand to St. George's Mount. There, Richard tears down the banner and tramples on it. This scene—an Eastern sunset warmly illustrating the Mount, with groups of armed crusaders in clamorous dispute—created a highly animated impression. The movement commences with the successive entries of the several choral divisions of Austrians, French, and English, and a two-part female chorus of eight pages. In the opening portion the consternation raised by the well-known incident of the banners is effectively expressed. Some solo passages follow, appropriate to the contention between Richard and the offending Duke of Austria, the interposition of the French king, and Sir Kenneth's acceptance of the charge of watching the English standard. The chorus "Draw your swords," with ample accompaniment of wind and brass, and the bustle and animation of the whole scene, made one of the most elaborate and effective stage illusions imaginable. The quarrel is soon over as the King reminds them that their task in Palestine is to fight for the Holy Sepulchre, and Richard has a prayer, "Monarch Supreme," the air of which had been heard in the opening prelude, followed by a stirring march and chorus. As the hosts disperse, Sir Kenneth enters, proud of his knightly duty. He sees the tent of his lady-love, and sings a romance, "On balmy wings," in which Sig. Campanini's voice has full range. His vigil is interrupted by the stealthy entrance of Nectabanus, who brings him a message from a royal lady, and a summons to follow him to her tent. The struggle of the knight between love and duty, and the malevolent glee of the slave, are depicted in a duet, and finally Sir Kenneth quits his post, and honor is conquered by love. Scene the third is the Queen's Pavilion—the Queen and ladies discovered embroidering, &c. In a part song, "Weary hours," the ladies express a desire to return home, and then Berengaria sings a "Romance of Navarre," "La guerra appena," with choral refrain. This is likely to become popular. Edith enters, sings the story of the "Ladye Eveline," and the Queen then informs her that Sir Kenneth has been decoyed from his post, and is now in the neighboring tent. Edith, indignant at the cruel jest, bitterly reproaches the Queen for thus placing the honor of a gallant knight in jeopardy, and Berengaria, dismayed, hastens to assuage her husband's certain anger. Sir Kenneth enters, and, in a grand duet with Edith, he declares his love. Edith tells him to keep the ring that was used to lure him to the tent, and then bids him speed back to the Mount. The King, however, now enters, and the intelligence of the outrage on the English banner stirs Richard to ungovernable rage. He menaces Kenneth with his battle-axe, and the climax is wrought out in a concerted piece and a finale that is full of animation, although not very original. The principals and chorus, and the most powerful orchestral effects, are all brought into employment with good dramatic effect, and the curtain falls on the second act.

From this point the interest falls off. The story, as a dramatic whole, begins to decline, and is occupied mainly by desultory material effects. King Richard is in his tent, on the eve of returning to England. He is reading a letter that acquaints him that Sir Kenneth is more than simple knight. The Queen and Edith enter, and in a trio the King bids Edith be of good cheer, for "something shall happen," that very night, that will lighten her grief, and brighten her eyes again. In scene the second, to the strains of a grand procession march, the King, and the Princes of the Crusade, with their followings, enter, to the jovial strains of a chorus, "To Merrie England" and then the King bids the Minstrel Knight sing a strain of love. Sir Kenneth's voice is heard behind the scenes singing the "Rose Song," as heard in the first act, and he then enters with the nobles. Richard acquaints his knights that Sir Kenneth is David, Earl of Huntingdon and Prince Royal of Scotland; joins his hand in Edith's, the March again breaks forth, the curtains of the pavilion are drawn aside, the sea and the ships of the Crusaders are discovered, and to a repetition of the smoothly written four-part choral harmony, "Cantiam dell' Inghilterra," the finale curtain falls. A rondo in this act, "Nella dolce trepidanza," splendidly sung by Mdme. Nilsson, is one of the chief features of the performance, and will doubtless attain considerable popularity. Besides the musical numbers we have mentioned, several others in the work are distinguished by high merit. Thus, Edith's romance, "La Canzone d'Evelina"; the romance for Berengaria, "La guerra appena," in

which Mdme. Marie Roze gained a well deserved encore; Sir Kenneth's aria, "A te coll' aure," and the duet for him and Edith, "Quest' anel," the latter part of which had to be repeated, are all good points. The chorus of the Arab soldiers at the beginning of Act I., "Soldiers of Araby" with its melodious finale movement, "Our master awaits us," is original and striking. The chorus for ladies' voices in Act II., "Hours and hours roll slowly on," is tuneful and effective, although not remarkably original, particularly in the first four bars, which strikingly recall "Ten little niggers," the comic song.

The manner in which the opera has been put upon the stage, and the excellence of the acting, reflect high credit on the enterprise. Mdme. Christine Nilsson as *Edith Plantagenet*, Mdme. Marie Roze as *Berengaria*, Sig. Campanini as *Sir Kenneth*, Sig. Rota as *Richard Cœur de Lion*, Sig. Catalani as *Nectabanus*, Sig. Campobello as *L'Emire*, all faithfully fulfil their trust. Mdme. Nilsson invests the proud but gentle English Princess with the true dramatic spirit, and with that vocal excellence which is all her own. No possible improvement could be suggested on her interpretation throughout. The two solos in Act I. and Act II. were admirably rendered, and the rondo in the third act, was, as we have said, exquisitely interpreted, and brought down a unanimous encore. Numerous encores, bouquets, and rappels were showered upon her throughout the evening. Mdme. Marie Roze was a personable and attractive queen, and well deserved her encore in Act II. Sig. Campanini did not look the gallant knight as regards make-up; he represented himself as too old; and how could he go to defend a banner against the mailed chivalry of Austria, in the simple walking costume of *Manrico* in the "*Trovatore*"? He should be armed to the eyes. Sig. Campanini sang nicely, making especial point with the love duet. *King Richard* was rather a puny king in the angry scene, instead of being the raging lion-temper as well as lionheart. His business with the battle-axe might be better developed, and look more of a muscular feat. The singing, however, of Sig. Rota was artistic. Sig. Catalani gave a spirited and picturesque impersonation of the malevolent slave, *Nectabanus*; Sig. Campobello, as *L'Emire*, acted and sung like a thorough artist; Sig. Costa as the *King of France*, Sig. Casaboni as the *Duke of Austria*, and Sig. Rinaldini as the *Baron de Vaux*, did well what they had to do. The choristers and the instrumentalists worked with a will; but the lowering of the pitch is not an improvement. Accustomed to sing up to a certain diapason, the human throat instinctively forms itself to produce the usual sounds, and the result is that the singers and instruments do not accord. There were notorious examples of this singing out of tune, for which the alteration of pitch was alone responsible. The performance, however, as a whole remains brilliant; and in all points of view, musical and spectacular, this posthumous work of Balfe's is worthy of the care and labor bestowed upon its production. *Orchestra, June 19.*

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, JULY 11, 1874.

Richard Wagner and his Theories.

II.

Wagner is a theorist. He has his own peculiar theory of Music,—that is to say, of the proper function, province, final cause, and power of music. He composes Operas upon a theory, and excuses the short-comings of his earlier operas, like *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, upon the ground that the time had not yet come for the full development of his own theoretic principle in practice; while on the other hand the outside world is caught by just those things in them which other musicians might have written and which are mere concessions to the accustomed forms and methods of stage music, dressed out with a vast deal of the modern melodramatic pomp and noise, and great spectacular display. Mozart made operas without a theory, and so did Weber, so did Beethoven his one, his unsurpassed *Fidelio* (he only sought a noble subject and was true to it); so did Rossini and all the

Italians before and after. The master musicians had no new theory of music, did not study to contrive one; they made music; and if they "built better than they knew," where is the loss by that? Gluck, you may say, did have a theory; that is, he wrote a famous Preface when he brought out his *Alceste*, in which he set forth the absurdities of the usual Italian type of opera, and announced his determination to study dramatic truth and fitness in his compositions; but he did not broach any peculiar theory of music; he did not scorn to write musical pieces, arias, choruses, &c., in good old musical forms; he did not turn the whole thing into endless recitative, "infinite melody," as Wagner calls it; he still made melodies, and was far enough from trying to reduce music to the position of a mere handmaid and slave to poetry, to words and forms of speech. He believed in music; for he had musical inspirations, and he knew how to express them, and they live. Perhaps it will be seen that Gluck exposed the faults, absurdities, extravagances into which the old Opera had run, with quite as critical and keen an eye as Wagner; only he kept within bounds and did not charge upon the very nature of Opera the depravities it had contracted. He sought to reform it, to restore it to its purity, and not to destroy it to make way for a new kind of "Art-work of the Future."

What is this Wagner theory? 1. In the first place, we may say it is based on a negation. It starts with the denial of music! Wagner does not really believe in music,—except when he forgets his theory and has to apologize for the time not being yet quite ripe. He says somewhere in his autobiographical confessions that he did not begin with music; he was not a musician from his boyhood; it was poetry that beckoned him the way that he should go; he wrote verses, translated Greek tragedies, composed plays; he took to music later, struck by the dramatic quality he felt in the Sonatas, Symphonies, &c., of Beethoven. He thinks he had a gift for poetry; perhaps we shall admit it. His musical gift seems more of a factitious quality; but, whether it be rare or ordinary, great or small, he seems to have been struck with the idea of utilizing the two gifts together, and of producing musical drama in which the words, the poetry should be of equal and in fact superior consequence to the music, which hitherto has been supreme in Opera. This led him to the conclusion that Opera must be no longer a mere department, form or branch of one great common Art called Music; but that poetry and music must be component elements, or "factors," together with scenery, costume, action, in a new, perfect, compound which he calls the "Art-work of the Future." And indeed the whole fabric, with its whole system, musical and scenic, is the logical outgrowth of his first postulate subordinating musical tone to speech. But we are anticipating.

We say Wagner's theory is the denial of the art of Music. He does not believe in the sufficiency of music in itself; he denies the efficacy of "pure" music, music without words, instrumental music. He even points to the example of Beethoven in his Ninth Symphony as furnishing the corner stone of his whole theory. He has the effrontery to declare that Beethoven, in bringing in the voices with Schiller's hymn to "Joy" in the last movement of that Symphony, did so because after the first three movements were instrumental music could go no further; the poet and the human voices had to be called in to help the music to express its meaning; and that therein the master as it were dropped his hands, confessing the mistake of his whole life's effort, and owning that his glorious Symphonies, Quartets, Sonatas, after all, were naught, and that the only salvation left for Music lay in the union of the Word with Tones,—giving the priority however to the Word, as to the masculine or active principle. But it has been clearly enough shown (see Mr. Bennett's article copied in a late number

of this Journal) that Beethoven had no such thought, that in his note offering the Ninth Symphony to his publisher he attaches no such significance to the exceptional fancy of introducing a chorus, and that he had done the same thing long before in a smaller work, the well-known *Fantasia* for piano-forte with orchestra and chorus. And the musician of the Future is careful not to tell us that the musician of the past, after furnishing him so accidentally with this fine corner stone, went on composing purely instrumental music, including some of his most ideal, beautiful creations, like the last violin Quartets, and that he even made some sketches for a tenth Symphony with evidently no thought of introducing voices.

Beethoven still believed in music,—music as such, pure and by itself. Wagner, we have said, does not. Was this too much to say? We think not; for to deny the independent validity of any Art, unwedded with another Art, is to refuse faith in the Art itself. Each Art has its own sphere, which is not that of another. All arts are ideal, all arts give expression to soul, feeling, character, and in some sense thought; all minister to the longing for the Beautiful; but not all in the same way. To say that music has no force, is sterile, impotent, without the fecundating principle of poetry, (for that is the way in which Wagner formulates the mutual relation of the two:—Music is feminine, passive, Poetry is masculine, active), is very much as if one should say that Painting is an incomplete and futile Art unless combined with Sculpture, or that Sculpture is of necessity a failure unless painted. The Art of Painting has its province, which is to represent things, persons, scenes, and place them in an ideal light, lift them out of mere prose and commonplace and make them all alive with character and meaning, and wholly through the medium of light and shade and color. This it can do well; but when it undertakes to do more, to trench on the domain of sculpture, to cheat with the illusion that you may feel round behind its figures, then it does badly and you feel the folly of it; then the pictorial muse is only trying to lift herself by her own ears. Painting is denied some powers, for the very reason that she may make the nobler use of powers which other arts have not. And does not the whole history of Art and culture prove, does not all sound, enduring criticism and Art philosophy concur in the axiom that every Art performs its noblest work, carries the most unqualified conviction with it, places itself above suspicion of all sham or false pretence, and so exerts the most inspiring influence, just in the proportion that, *ceteris paribus*, it is content with its own proper sphere, accepts its limits, and does not stultify itself and run into sickening affectation by trying to do more than it was ever meant to do? So Opera, an outgrowth and most natural product of the art of Music,—seeking the end of music mainly, but borrowing words for a cheap vehicle, just as the prismatic light of heaven must fall upon some mote or atom in the air, or some opaque substance, to render itself visible and be light to us,—has to renounce much of the consistency of spoken drama, much of the unity of time and space, or else be inconsistent with itself as music. If, so that music may have its way, and a musical idea complete itself, the actor, rushing to some swift deed of crime or rescue, stays glued to the footlights (like one in a nightmare who would run), while he sings out his aria to the end, we can forgive that to music, which we know don't pretend to any but its own perfections. But on the other hand, to offset that weakness, Opera can let you listen to four, six characters at once, without distraction, making them all transparent to you, while it vouchsafes to you some exquisite creation of pure harmony in the form of a quartet, or sextet, or whatever concerted piece, say the first quartet in *Don Juan*. When will the spoken drama give us that? Pantomime, to be sure, can do it after a fashion; but what is pantomime but imitation, and hence the secondary rank it always occupies in Art?

One more suggestion we would make, and wonder that we have not seen it made by others. The Wagnerian doctrine of the relation of Music to Poetry appears to run counter to the general experience of persons in the progress of their taste for music. Most persons, we incline to think, arrive at the love and taste for pure, or instrumental music, as the final stage. That at least was our experience, and we have traced the same, step by step, in many of our musical friends. Musically we seem to grow in that di-

rection. First one cares chiefly for the singer; only later does he begin to care more for the music. First a song or ballad or plain piece of vocal harmony (not *recitative* by any means!) is the open sesame to his sealed sense; then he feels the glory of Italian Opera, and is infatuated by the prima donnas and the tenors; then he finds a deeper charm in nobler operas, say *Don Giovanni* or *Fidelio*, and presently discovers that a very great part of the charm resides in the wonderful accompaniment and background of the orchestra; and finally it ends with finding the *ne plus ultra*, the very crowning glory, the very music of the music in a Beethoven Symphony, or it may be a String Quartet, or a Bach Organ fugue or *Chaconne* for the violin. And this is one of those revolutions which do not go backward. In this they would all seem to be travelling away from Wagner; but Wagner tries to intercept, arrest their flight by making his orchestra after all, in spite of theory, perhaps unconsciously, the paramount attraction, and practically the most important factor in his opera. Does he not, in explaining to an "interviewer" (see letter on first page) the reasons of the peculiar arrangement of his Bayreuth stage, with the wide orchestra sunk out of sight between it and the audience, describe it as an ideal, distant scene and drama "seen through an invisible wall of music"? It is in this invisible wall that all the real magic is, to hide.

With this hint we pause before proceeding to the next portion of our subject, meanwhile fortifying our position on one very central point, by a somewhat copious and cogent extract from the excellent article in the *Galaxy*, to which we alluded in our last, by Mr. Richard Grant White. Mr. White says:

The notion that two arts are to join for one effect, is the falsest that ever was evolved by the spirit of eclecticism—eclecticism which never did, nor ever can, create anything new, or strong, or beautiful. If the vehicle of dramatic or lyric expression is to be language, it must be language only; if music, then only music. Whether we would have it so or not, this must be; for words, as expressive of thought, distinguished from the suggestion of emotion, are almost undistinguishable in lyric music, and quite undistinguishable in the musical drama. Wagner insists upon and labors at a dramatic poem which shall share with the music to which it is sung in producing the dramatic effect of the performance. Vain effort. "Lohengrin," written in German, was translated into Italian; and except for such of the audience as defy common sense, and set at naught all dramatic illusion by glancing from the stage to those impertinent "Books of thoprun talian nenglish," and from the books to the stage, it might as well have been sung in Greek or English itself. No crotchet more absurd was ever hatched than that the thoughts of a poet can engage the attention of those who are listening to the music which those very thoughts may have inspired. A few words suggestive of emotion may be heard, and have dramatic value, but than these no more. The impossibility is both physical and psychological.

This incapacity of mind and body to receive an impression from two mediums of expression at once, conforms to and cooperates with the requirements of all art. Every art is sufficient unto itself. Every art has limits, in endeavoring to pass which it becomes not only powerless but ridiculous; but within those limits it admits no rival, no coworker. Hence it is that great music is not written to great poetry, that music is not married to immortal verse. A beautiful song, like one of those which Shakespeare has scattered through his plays, needs no music. By its inherent quality it attains its end. In itself it is a song. It sings itself, and is both words and music. What would "Take, O take those lips away" gain by being sung to any music? If the music were great, the poetic value of the thoughts would be lost, or sink out of sight for the time; if the music were inferior to the words, it could only provoke the resentment of impertinence. Hence it is that lyric writing not of the highest order, that which embodies the pleasant suggestion of emotion in flowing rhythm, without much strength or beauty of expression, is most frequently made the vehicle of fine musical thought. The composer expresses that which the song has suggested to him. His is the passion, his its perfect utterance. Lyric expression may come from one soul, not from two. Words written for music should merely minister occasion, and be the humble, unseen nucleus of beauty, like a blade

of grass made splendid by the jewels of the morning.

Not only is every art sufficient to itself, but all true art is superior to the substance in which it works. The value of a statue is in its form. It is as beautiful in clay as it is in marble; and if it were in gold, all its worth beyond its form might just as well be in the shape of ingots. Statues are put in marble or in bronze only that their beauty may endure. Moreover, the greatness of any work of art bears a certain proportion to the unlikeness of the substance in which it works to the object represented. The mastery of the art being equal, the greater this unlikeness the higher the pleasure received. The result must not be too like reality, or the skill which produces it ceases to be art, and becomes mere imitation; and nothing is worse than mere imitation except reality. It is a condition of the higher pleasures to be derived from art, that we should never be deceived, but that we should always see, and see very plainly, that we are not looking upon reality. And in proportion to the strength of this impression, combined with the vividness of the suggestion of the truth of nature, is the high quality of the pleasure we receive. Yet further, we must see that the artist did not strive to produce the effect of reality. It is a defiance of this last condition of beauty in art which makes wax figures repulsive and ridiculous. If it be true, as some have believed, that the great Greek statues were colored like nature (of which there does not appear to be sufficient evidence), and that their colorless condition is due merely to the lapse of time, then we owe to accident the attainment of the highest effect of plastic art. If form is our medium of expression, let it be form only; if color, only color. True, painting essays to express both form and color. But it gives no actual form. It works upon a flat surface. You cannot get behind the figures in a picture. The only medium of expression in painting is color limited by outline, by which alone it expresses form. If a painter were, by moulding his canvas, to round out his figures, he would merely make them and himself ridiculous. He must express form, that is, surface and solidity, by modelling, which he does by varying the tint and the intensity of his color.

CORRECTION. We were under a false impression regarding the authorship of the Letter copied in our last number from the *London Musical Standard*, as will be seen by the subjoined note, to which we cheerfully give place:

547 Broadway, New York City, July 8th.

My Dear Sir:—I have just seen your valuable journal of June 27, and am much surprised to find in it a letter (quoted from the *London Musical Standard*, headed "Mr. Howard Glover on 'Lohengrin.'") Now as I never did at any time correspond with the *London Musical Standard* and am in no way responsible for the letter in question, I shall feel obliged by the insertion of this brief disclaimer at the earliest possible moment.

Believe me sincerely yours,
HOWARD GLOVER.

To John S. Dwight, Esq.

THE ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK. We have received a very courteous and interesting letter (in German) from Dr. LEOPOLD DAMROSCH, the distinguished violinist and conductor, in which he complains,—not without reason, we should judge,—of great injustice done to this Society by some disparaging comments in the letter which we copied from the *London Musical Standard*. Under the mistaken impression that the letter was from one of our own correspondents, Dr. Damrosch writes: "It must be disagreeable to you to find that a sheet like yours, which enters the lists so boldly, conscientiously and intelligently for all noble music, is after all not free from the stain of having frivolous, unacquainted and untruthful correspondents."

We copied the letter principally for what it said of *Lohengrin*, and also because the summing up of the musical season in New York might interest our readers; of course, we did not hold ourselves responsible for its opinions. Dr. D., in behalf of his Society, disclaims all "opposition" to the "Church Music Association"; how can an Oratorio society conflict with one which gives no Oratorios? Moreover it is not a "so called," but a real Oratorio Society. And that it is not "feeble" is evident enough, he claims, from the fact that its first public performance [of *Samson*] has won for it universal recognition. To the insinuation that "the excellent violinist, Dr. D." had ventured beyond his depth in conducting an Oratorio, he submits that, "however pleasant it may be to him to be recognized as a violinist, yet in Germany, [which he left three years ago to become conductor of the New York 'Arion'] he enjoyed the reputation, more especially, of being a good Director, having conducted a great many performances both of symphonic and of choral works." He further adds the Society has about 130 members [instead of "100"], and that in stead of its taking them "over a year" to study *Samson*, it was all done in hardly more than two months [only 11 rehearsals without orchestra].

Musical Correspondence.

CINCINNATI. An old resident of Cincinnati, long known in a wide circle of friends for his musical taste and culture, as well as for a vein of rare humor which shows itself in his quaint pen-and-ink sketches, and in his familiar letters, relates his experiences as one of the chorus in the Harmonic Society of that city, in its performance of Liszt's "Prometheus." We venture to steal an extract or two from one of his private letters to a friend, written without the remotest idea of its ever being published.

Cincinnati, May 27, 1874.

*** To-night they migrate to Pike's Opera House, to hear the second grand concert of the Harmonic Society, in which is to be performed Liszt's "Prometheus," which being a Pagan Myth, I suppose it is not proper to call it an *Oratorio*. It is very *Liszt-y* indeed, and jerky. The time is full of delicate rests, like walking on tip-toe, or rather an oriental egg-dance; full of peril; as we make narrow escapes sometimes in dreams; going it with a sense of vertigo, and wondering how we got there!—the voices being wafted over the chasms by trombones and oboes. It is perfectly awful.

*** I don't know what dear E. will think after hearing the Boston Handel and Haydn. I think we are pretty good on a regular trot, like the Messiah and Creation. We can even keep along side of that active little roadster *Bach*, whose legs move under him so quick. But if you want to see fits of hysterics you ought to see us in Prometheus!

**** The Dettingen Te Deum and the "Stabat Mater" last night were splendid. We had a good house, and every body was delighted—I think must very nearly have paid expenses. . . Mrs. Smith has such a clear, pure, high soprano, and sings so accurately! Whitney has a magnificent bass. **** Well, just pray for me, thermometer 90°, standing in cloth coat, on the top tier of 200 singers, whose natural temperature is excited by Prometheus and blazing gas, and audience of 2000 down there, and the spiders in the ceiling hatching their eggs prematurely on account of the heat—singing something I don't know—jostled by nervous elbows, and sympathetically affected by a general fuss, . . . when I ought to be in bed, snoring a natural bass to myself, like a husband and father.

NEW YORK. The annual benefit of Mr. Theodore Thomas, which took place at the Central Park Garden, on Thursday evening last, afforded the public a good opportunity for the expression of the regard and esteem in which our enterprising conductor is held, and, you may be sure, they were ready to improve the occasion. Preparation for the concert was made on an extensive scale. The tables were removed from the auditorium and, in their stead, numbered chairs were placed row after row, as near together as possible. The price of admission was fixed at \$1.00 and there was an additional charge of 50cts for a reserved chair. A placard, conspicuously posted, announced that for this occasion, smoking would not be permitted in the main hall. The day was bright and pleasant, but the thermometer had aspirations and mounted higher and higher until nightfall, so that the evening was the most sultry and oppressive which we have experienced this season.

A bad time for a concert you will say. And so it was, but everyone came here. The reserved seats were all taken and hundreds who were unable to find place in the concert room took refuge in the garden proper, where they were comparatively cool and comfortable.

I fear that some of our newspaper critics sought this sylvan retreat, where lager abounds, and where the music is imperfectly heard, rather than brave the heat and glare of the auditorium.

One of them at least published on the following day a glowing account of the performance of Rossini's *Tell* overture, regardless of the fact that a Strauss waltz was played in place of the overture. The concert began with Meyerbeer's grand Inauguration March, which was written in 1862 for the London World's Fair. This work is chiefly interesting from its novelty, it being played on this occasion for the first time in America. It seems to be, like most compositions which are written to order or for special occasions, rather dull and commonplace, and it must be considered unworthy even of a composer who at his best is not remarkable for serious earnest purpose.

Beethoven's *Leonora* overture, No. 3, came next on the list, and it was played as befits a work of undying beauty.

The *Fantasia Caprice*, written by Vieuxtemps for the violin and arranged for the orchestra, which followed, has met with great favor at the Garden Concerts.

This, with the two Wagner pieces which followed (*Vorspiel* from "*Lohengrin*" and "*Der Ritt der Walkueren*") gained much applause.

Part second of the programme was entirely taken up by the music to Schiller's "*Song of the Bell*," composed by Carl Stoeckert and here performed for the first time in America.

This somewhat overrated poem was read by Miss Kate Field, and my respect for that lady's well known talent leads me to believe that she acquitted herself creditably, although sitting near the centre of the hall I could distinguish scarcely a word of the text. The size of the room is such that extraordinary exertion is required on the part of the reader to make herself audible, and the large opening back of the stage and at the side of the hall added to the difficulty.

The music, which is introduced from time to time during the reading, consists of a *Prelude* or *Introduction*; a number of tone pictures to illustrate episodes of the poem; a sort of recitative to accompany certain parts of the reading; and a *Finale*. Parts of the music are very interesting, but the effect of the work as a whole was very wearisome. It is to be hoped that we may be given an opportunity of hearing the music without the attendant verbiage; its merits can be better perceived then.

The selections in part third of the programme were as follows:—

Overture to *William Tell* (for which a Strauss waltz was introduced).
Meditation. Solo violin and orchestra.Gounod.
Polonaise. "Mignon"A. Thomas.
A. A. C.

THE "JOHN BROWN SONG"—A writer in the *Transcript* says the Second Battalion of Infantry (Boston Light Infantry), Major Ralph W. Newton, were ordered to Fort Warren in April, 1861, and were the first troops to garrison the fort. It was there that a glee club was formed, and there the celebrated John Brown song emanated. The tune is a very old one—old Methodist camp-meeting. The words were made up by different persons. Efforts were made to change it to "Ellsworth's body," etc., but that didn't seem to work, and all hands got back to Brown's. Hall's band was the first to play it on dress-parade at the fort, and Gilmore's in Boston. The Fletcher Webster Regiment, Twelfth Massachusetts, were the first to sing it through the streets of Boston; and, when they marched through Broadway, New York, en route for Washington, at route step, the band playing and the thousand men singing, the effect was miraculous. The first notes set for the music were written by Captain James E. Greenleaf, who was of the glee club, and the first publication was by Ditson & Co. The Boston Light Infantry may rightly claim the John Brown song.

Special Notices.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE LATEST MUSIC,

Published by Oliver Ditson & Co.

Vocal, with Piano Accompaniment.

Chorus of Spinning Maidens. For 3 Female Voices. 3. C to e. *Eichberg*. 40

"Turn my spinning wheel so deftly."

A chorus sung with excellent effect, at the School Festival in Boston. The "spinning" is done mainly in the accompaniment, which is very rapid, but not difficult.

Carrie Dee. Song and Cho. 2. C to f. *Percy*. 30

"I dream of thee, Sweet Carrie Dee,
So lovely and so fair."

Very pretty indeed.

The Brook and the Wave. 3. F to f. *Molloy*. 35

"Running with feet of silver,
Over the sands of gold."

Longfellow's words set to a sunny, cheerful, light tripping melody.

The Magic Spell. 3. C to e. *Lecsey*. 35

"I have charms for every care,
Who will have this magic spell?"

A lively, gypsy-like song, which cannot fail to please.

Spanish Boat Song. 3. Eb to e. *Aid*. 30

"Ho-al! Ho-al! The boatmen cry,
Upon the Guadalupe river!"

By the composer of "*The Danube River*," and is a smoother song than that, and perhaps will be as great a favorite.

When the Ship comes Home. 3. F to f. *Bliss*. 35

"O joy of joys! These moments sweet
Make up for bye-gone years."

The common story of the sailor's sad parting and happy return, but very sweetly and musically told.

I am looking down upon you, Mother. 2.

G to d. *Webster*. 30

"Said a sweet and laughing voice,
I shall see you in the morning."

Very sweet thoughts in this song, which is a "mother" song, and will please everybody.

Instrumental.

Yo Semite March. 3. Eb *Pease*. 40

The composer evidently was inspired by the beauty of the wonderful valley. The march is a fine one, and has a quality of "romantic grandeur."

Fire Alarm Galop. 3. C. *Nelson*. 40

Mr. Nelson devotes the first page to a whirling alarm, which has an awakening effect, and it is followed by a very wide-awake galop, with considerable "fire" in it.

Sweet is Summer. Idylle. 4. Eb *Cloy*. 40

A most cheerful and flowery Idylle, by the author of "*Northern Pearl*."

Overture to Mignon. 4 hands. 4. *Thomas*. \$1.25

One of the newest operas. Players should not fail to practice it.

Grada Waltz. 2. G. *Waynick*. 30

A queer name for a very delicate and pretty waltz.

Whipporwill's Song. 3. Eb *Maylath*. 25

The well-known favorite song neatly transcribed.

Adolph Hesse's Organ Music. Variations in Ab Op. 3. 5. 50

A fine, hearty melody, varied in a smooth, strong way, for manual and pedals, by Hesse, who for some time was considered, next to Schneider, the best European organist.

ABBREVIATIONS.—Degrees of difficulty are marked 1 to 7. The key is marked with a capital letter: as C, B flat, &c. A small Roman letter marks the highest note, if on the staff, an *italic* letter the highest note, if above the staff.

